CLAIMS

1 1. An apparatus comprising:

2   at least one processor;

3   a memory coupled to the at least one processor;

4   a system configuration manager residing in the memory, the system configuration

5 manager including:

6   model configuration settings that specify desired configuration settings for

7   a computer system; and

8   a configuration mapping mechanism that maps at least one configuration

9   setting for at least one computer system to the model configuration settings.

1 2. The apparatus of claim 1 wherein the configuration mapping mechanism maps the at

2 least one configuration setting for a selected platform to corresponding configuration

3 settings for a different platform.

1 3. The apparatus of claim 1 wherein the at least one configuration setting comprises

2 system settings and customization settings.

1 4. A networked computer system comprising:

2   (A) a server computer system that includes model configuration settings that

3 specify desired configuration settings for a computer system;

4   (B) a plurality of endpoint computer systems coupled to the server computer

5 system, each endpoint computer system including corresponding configuration settings;

6   (C) a system administration workstation coupled to the server computer system,

7 the system administration workstation including a graphical user interface for

8 administration of the configuration settings of the plurality of endpoint computer systems,

9 the graphical user interface including at least one display panel that allows a user to select

10 the model configuration settings, that allows a user to select from the plurality of endpoint

11 computer systems for comparison with the model configuration settings, that displays

12 differences between the selected endpoint computer systems and the model configuration

13 settings, that allows a user to select from the selected endpoint computer systems for

14 updating, and that automatically updates the configuration settings of the endpoint

15 computer systems selected for updating according to the model configuration settings.

1 5. The networked computer system of claim 4 wherein the server computer system

2 further includes a configuration mapping mechanism that maps at least one configuration

3 setting for at least one computer system to the model configuration settings.

1 6. The networked computer system of claim 5 wherein the configuration mapping

2 mechanism maps at least one configuration setting in a first computer platform to at least

3 one corresponding configuration setting in a second computer platform.

1 7. The networked computer system of claim 4 wherein the at least one configuration

2 setting for each endpoint computer system comprises system settings and customization

3 settings.

1   8. The networked computer system of claim 4 further comprising a computer program

2   running on each computer system selected for updating, the computer program sending

3   status of any requested update of configuration settings to the graphical user interface.

1   9. A method for managing configuration settings for a plurality of computer systems

2   coupled together via a network, the method comprising the steps of:

3   (A) defining configuration settings for a model system;

4   (B) determining differences, if any, between the configuration settings for at least

5   one of the plurality of computer systems and the configuration settings for the model

6   system;

7   (C) selecting at least one of the plurality of computer systems for updating; and

8   (D) updating the configuration settings for the selected at least one computer

9   system according to the configuration settings for the model system.

1   10. The method of claim 9 wherein step (A) comprises the step of selecting one of the

2   plurality of computer systems as the model system, thereby defining the configuration

3   settings for the one computer system as the configuration settings for the model system.

1   11. The method of claim 9 wherein step (A) comprises the step of defining a

2   configuration settings profile that includes the configuration settings for the model

3   system.

1   12. The method of claim 9 wherein step (B) comprises the steps of:

2   collecting configuration settings from at least one computer system selected from

3   the plurality of computer systems; and

4   comparing the configuration settings from the selected at least computer system

5   with the configuration settings for the model system.

1 13. The method of claim 12 wherein step (B) further comprises the steps of:

2   displaying to a user any differences between the configuration settings from the

3 selected at least one computer system with the configuration settings for the model

4 system.

1 14. The method of claim 12 wherein step (C) comprises the steps of:

2   displaying to a user any differences between the configuration settings from the

3 selected at least one computer system with the configuration settings for the model

4 system; and

5   allowing a user to select at least one computer system to update from the selected

6 at least one computer system.

1 15. The method of claim 12 wherein step (D) comprises the steps of:

2   (D1) translating the configuration settings for the model system to the

3 configuration settings for each selected computer system; and

4   (D2) updating each selecting computer system with the translated configuration

5 settings.

1 16. The method of claim 15 wherein step (D1) comprises the step of translating the

2 configuration settings for the model system into corresponding configuration settings for

3 each platform type that is included in the selected at least one computer system.

1 17. The method of claim 12 wherein step (D) comprises the steps of:

2   (D1) requesting that each computer system selected for updating update its

3 corresponding configuration settings; and

4   (D2) each computer system selected for updating reporting status of the requested

5 update.

1   18. A method for managing configuration settings for a plurality of computer systems

2   coupled together via a network, the method comprising the steps of:

3   (A) collecting configuration settings from each of the plurality of computer

4   systems;

5   (B) defining configuration settings for a model system;

6   (C) selecting at least one of the plurality of computer systems for analysis;

7   (D) determining differences, if any, between the configuration settings for at least

8   one of the plurality of computer systems and the configuration settings for the model

9   system;

10   (E) displaying the differences on a graphical user interface;

11   (F) selecting at least one of the plurality of computer systems for updating;

12   (G) performing any required mapping between the configuration settings for the

13   model system and the configuration settings for each computer system selected for

14   updating;

15   (H) updating the configuration settings for each computer system selected for

16   updating according to the configuration settings for the model system.

1   19. The method of claim 18 wherein step (H) comprises the steps of:

2   (H1) requesting that each computer system selected for updating update its

3   corresponding configuration settings; and

4   (H2) each computer system selected for updating reporting status of the requested

5   update.

1   20. A program product comprising:

2   (A) a system configuration manager that includes:

3   (A1) model configuration settings that specify desired configuration

4   settings for a computer system; and

5   (A2) a configuration mapping mechanism that maps at least one

6   configuration setting for at least one computer system to the model configuration

7   settings; and

8   (B) computer-readable signal bearing media bearing the system configuration

9   manager.

1   21. The program product of claim 20 wherein the signal bearing media comprises

2   recordable media.

1   22. The program product of claim 20 wherein the signal bearing media comprises

2   transmission media.

1   23. The program product of claim 20 wherein the configuration mapping mechanism

2   maps the at least one configuration setting for a selected platform to corresponding

3   configuration settings for a different platform.

1   24. The program product of claim 20 wherein the at least one configuration setting

2   comprises system settings and customization settings.

1   25. The program product of claim 20 wherein the system configuration manager further

2   comprises a computer program that runs on each at least one computer system and that

3   reports status of any requested update of configuration settings.

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